



Lesson Objectives

1. To learn that our food comes from plants or animals and that it usually has to be changed in some way before we can eat it.
2. To identify where different foods we eat come from and the distance they travel (food miles).
3. To understand the benefits of eating food grown locally, both for our health and the environment.
4. To review the difference between processed and unprocessed foods and the health benefits of eating unprocessed food.

Review the Last Chapter

- What type of information can we find on food labels? How do we know if a food is healthy? *[Examples of responses may include: low in calories; low in fat, especially bad fats (saturated, trans fats); high in protein.]*
- What are some examples of healthy snacks?
- What does processed food mean? How can you tell if a food is processed or not?



Helpful Hints

- All of our food comes from somewhere – plants or animals. Emphasize this.
- Plant and animal products have to be cooked or changed somehow (like pieces of fruit are picked from a tree) before we can eat them.
- Foods that are changed a lot are called processed foods. Most junk foods (like cookies, candy, potato chips) are processed foods. In general, foods that are less processed are better for our health. (Examples of unprocessed foods include: apples, berries, vegetables, baked potatoes, fresh meats.)



Helpful Hints

- Foods that are grown close to home, or what we call local foods, are better for the environment and for us. They require less gasoline to move to where they will be sold because they don't have to be moved long distances. Food that is transported over long distances also is more likely to contain chemicals or preservatives so it can survive the journey.
- Food grown locally (near us) also can relate to traditional culture and lifestyles because people in a local area have traditional ways of using local foods. Ways we can help support local foods in our community include: shop at local farmers' markets, eat traditional foods, and encourage our friends to do the same.
- If you cannot locate a green and red tomato for Activity 2, other green and red food items could be substituted (such as apples).

Activity 1: Plant or Animal

(Adapted from *Food a Fact of Life: Key Fact 1: All food comes from plants or animals*, retrieved from <https://archive.foodafactoflife.org.uk/Sheet.aspx?siteId=14§ionId=63&contentId=144>).

Purpose of the Activity

- To reinforce the key facts stated in the helpful hints, especially that all of our food comes from plants or animals.
- To help participants understand that foods are processed (changed from the raw form) before we eat them.



Materials needed

- Large piece of paper or white board
- Tape
- Cards with pictures of foods that come from plants or animals



Instructions

- 1.** Explain that eating food that is grown or caught locally is good for the environment and our health. Teach the participants about these three key facts regarding where food comes from. (Adapted from *Food a Fact of Life: Food and Farming Teachers' Guide*, retrieved from <https://archive.foodafactoflife.org.uk/Sheet.aspx?siteId=14§ionId=63&contentId=143>).
- a.** All food comes from plants or animals. Some examples of food that comes from animals include: milk comes from cows; hamburgers are beef, which is meat that comes from cows; eggs come from chickens, and more (feel free to add others). Some examples of food that comes from plants include: apples grow on trees; corn and wheat are used to make tortillas and bread, and more (again, feel free to add others).
- b.** Food has to be farmed, caught, or grown at home. Some people hunt or catch their food while others grow plants for food.
- c.** Food has to be changed in some way so we can eat it. For example, apples and other fruit have to be picked, washed, and cut. Beef, which is meat from a cow, has to be shaped and cooked (such as into a hamburger).
- 2.** Make cards with pictures of food before the lesson. These can be found on www.NAClubs.org or you can make your own cards with pictures of foods that youth in your community typically eat. Make at least twenty cards, 10 with foods that come from animals and 10 with foods that come from plants. Examples are: **(1)** food from animals – milk, eggs, chicken, hamburgers, bison meat, ham, turkey, fish, etc.; **(2)** food from plants – bread, tortillas, corn chips, apples, oranges, cucumber, tomatoes, etc.
- 3.** Draw a line down the middle of the white board or paper. Write animal on one side and plant on the other side.
- 4.** Put the cards on a table and ask the participants to volunteer to pick up one card each.
- 5.** Ask the participants to take turns taping the cards to the appropriate half of the white board or paper. Encourage them to help each other and ask one another if they don't know whether a food comes from a plant or an animal.
- 6.** After all of the cards are displayed, explain to the participants that foods are changed in some way before we eat them. Discuss how a few of the foods on the cards were changed. For example, milk was taken from a cow and then pasteurized or cleaned to get rid of germs. Meat is shaped, cut, and cooked. Fruits and vegetables are picked, cleaned, and cut. Wheat and corn are ground up into flour, which is then used in bread and tortillas.

Activity 2: The Traveling Tomato

(Adapted from *Falls Brook Centre: Food Miles: Growing Local Food Connections*, retrieved from <http://ediblegardenproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Food-Miles-LP-Falls-Brook-Centre.pdf>).

Purpose of the Activity

- To teach participants about food miles.
- To help participants learn about the benefits of eating local foods, both for the environment and their health.



Materials needed

- Computer with internet access
- Paper
- Tape
- Marker
- A green tomato
- A red tomato

Instructions

1. Before the lesson, write the following words on three separate sheets of paper: Farmer from (Canada or Mexico), Farmer from (the community where your Club is located), and Local Consumer from (the community and state where your Club is located). Write 100 Food Miles on 10-15 sheets of paper.
2. Show the participants a brief online video on food miles. A link to this video can be found on www.NAClubs.org.
3. Ask the participants for a volunteer to play a Farmer located in a country far away, like Canada (if your community is in the North, East, or Midwest) or Mexico (if your community is in the South or the West) and for a Farmer located in a community near your Club. Then ask the participants for a volunteer to play a Consumer of food who is local to your area. Give the volunteers their respective signs and a piece of tape. Ask them to tape the sign on their chest.
4. Ask the volunteers to stand on opposite sides of the room and all the other participants to line up in between them. Randomly hand out the 100 Food Miles signs to the remaining participants.
5. Give the Farmer a green tomato. Ask him or her to pass it to the person next to them, and then tell the participants to keep passing it around until everyone has held it and it reaches the Local Consumer.



6. Explain to the participants that each time the tomato is passed to a new person it represents 100 miles of travel. Many foods we find in our supermarkets travel a long distance to reach us. Explain that food miles are the miles a food travels to reach us. As an added lesson, have the participants calculate how many food miles are between the Farmer and Local Consumer, and write this number down.
7. Then tell the Local Farmer and Consumer to stand next to each other in front of the room. Explain that this second exercise will represent a Local Farmer and a Local Consumer in the same town or community.
8. Hand the Local Farmer a red tomato.
9. Tell him or her to pass it to the Local Consumer. Explain that when we buy from local farms, our food miles are much fewer. The food is not passed between many people and it does not travel many miles. As an added lesson, have the participants calculate how many food miles are between the Local Farmer and Local Consumer. Write this number down and compare it to the food miles between the Farmer and Local Consumer.
10. Explain that the fewer the food miles, the better for the environment and our health. The red tomato represents fresh, ripe food. Local food is usually more ripe and ready to eat when it is harvested. Food that travels many miles from far away is usually harvested when it is not yet ripe. After it travels many miles, it has fewer nutrients and isn't as healthy as local food. Foods that travel long distances also require more gas and energy to transport them, which is why local foods are better for the environment.

Activity 3: Know My Food!

(Adapted from *Falls Brook Centre: Food Miles: Growing Local Food Connections*, retrieved from <http://ediblegardenproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Food-Miles-LP-Falls-Brook-Centre.pdf>).

Purpose of the Activity

- To learn about foods that were traditionally grown and eaten locally.
- To review the health benefits of eating less processed food.



Materials needed

- Index cards with pictures of processed foods and their original sources (see examples below), 1 set per 2-4 participants
- Local food samples
- A guest speaker from the local community who has knowledge of traditional foods (e.g., a farmer, community gardener, or Elder)

Instructions

- Before the activity, make index cards listing processed foods and their original sources. One option is to copy p. 21 from the resource, *"Food Miles: Growing Local Food Connections,"* and cut out each picture and put it on an index card. This option can be found on www.NAClubs.org. Another option is to create your own pictures. Make one card for each of these processed food and original source pairs:

Processed Food	Original Source
French fries	Potatoes
Steak	Cow
Bread	Wheat
Eggs	Chicken
Jam	Strawberry
Ramen noodles	Wheat
Hot Cheetos	Corn
SPAM	Pig
Orange juice	Oranges
Donut	Wheat
Oatmeal	Grains
Fry Bread	Wheat
Hot dog	Pork
Soda	Water and sugar
Reese's	Peanuts
Ice cream	Cow
Crackers	Wheat
Tater Tots	Potatoes
Canned tuna	Fish
Milkshake	Cow

- Before the activity, invite a guest speaker from the local community to give a brief demonstration on using local, traditional foods. This speaker could be a local farmer, community gardener, or Elder who knows traditional recipes.
- If possible, ask the guest speaker to help find some samples of local foods for the participants to taste during the lesson.



- 4.** Start the activity by reminding the participants that the food we eat all comes from a plant or an animal. Foods have to be changed in some way so that we can eat them (e.g. picking and cutting fruit, cooking vegetables).
- 5.** Hand out one index card to each of the participants. Ask them to work together to make pairs of original source foods and their processed food products. Ask them to lay out the pairs together on the floor.
- 6.** Another way to do this activity is as a game of memory. Divide the participants into groups of 2-4 players and give each group a set of index cards. On a table, lay the index cards in a grid face down. Participants take turns flipping over pairs of cards. During each turn, a player will turn over one index card, and then a second index card. If the two index cards are a match, that player earns one point and removes the matching index cards from the game. If the index cards do not match, the player turns the index cards back over. If the index cards do match, the player gets one more turn before it is the next player's turn. The goal is to match more index cards than the other players. Players earn one point for each pair of matched index cards. The player with the highest score after all of the index cards have been matched wins the game. Remind participants that during the game of memory, when index cards are turned over, they should try and remember where they are for when it is their turn to match the index cards.
- 7.** Remind participants what processed food is. This is food that has been changed a lot from its original source. For example, potato chips and French fries are potatoes that have been cut, fried, and cooked in oil and salt, which adds unhealthy fats to the original food. Eating a baked potato is healthier for us than eating potato chips or French fries. Similarly, eating fresh fruit like strawberries is healthier than jam, which has added sugar. In general, the less processed a food is, and the closer it is to the original food source, the more healthy it is for us.
- 8.** Introduce the guest speaker. Ask him or her to give a brief presentation about local foods that are traditionally grown in your area.
- 9.** Invite the participants and guest speaker to share samples of traditional, local foods.



Talking Circle

Invite the guest speaker to stay for the Talking Circle and to help facilitate the closing discussion. Lead an open discussion with the participants using these guiding questions:

- What are examples of unprocessed food we can eat?
- What are the benefits of eating locally grown food?
- What are ways we can help support local food providers in our community?



Optional Activities

Found on www.NAClubs.org.

- Take a field trip to a local farm, farmers' market, or farm stand.
- Read the story of Miguel's Tomatoes to the participants as part of a Talking Circle.
- Discuss the lessons in the story about food miles, food processing, and local foods.
- Play interactive games on the computer.
- Food: A Fact of Life - Food and Farming
- Tiki the Penguin's Guide to Food
- Farm to Table Nutrition Learning Activities
- Self-Care Corner Activities 